# A Voyage on a Pan of Ice

By

Dr. WILFRED T. GRENFELL

THE NEW ENGLAND GRENFELL ASSOCIATION
14 Beacon Street, Boston
1903

AS DR. GRENFELL LANDED FROM THE ICE PAN

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# THE STORY.

It was Easter Sunday, but with us still winter. Everything was still covered with snow and ice. Immediately after morning service word came from the hospital to say that a large team of dogs had come from sixty miles to the southward to get a doctor on a very urgent case. It was that of a young man on whom we had operated about a fortnight before for an acute bone disease in the thigh. The people had allowed the wound to close. The poisoned matter had accumulated, and we thought that we would have to remove the leg.

There was obviously, therefore, no time to be lost. So, having packed up the necessary instruments, dressings, and drugs, and filled out the dog sleigh with my best dogs, I left at once, the messengers following me with their team.

Being late in April, there is always the risk of getting wet through the ice, so that I was carefully prepared with spare outfit, which included a change of garments, snow-shoes, rifle, compass, axe, and oilskin overclothes. My dogs, being a powerful team, could not be held back, and, though I managed to wait twice for their sleigh, I had reached a village about twenty miles on the journey before nightfall, and had fed the dogs, and was gathering one or two people for prayers when they caught me up.

During the night the wind shifted to the north-east, which brought in fog and rain, softened the snow, and made travelling very bad, besides heaving a heavy sea into the bay. Our drive next morning would be somewhat over forty miles, the first ten miles on an arm of the sea, on salt-water ice. In order not to be separated too long from my friends, I sent them ahead two hours before me, appointing a rendezvous in a log tilt that we have built in the woods as a half-way house, for there is no one living along all that long coast line, and in case of accident, which

we have had more than once before, we keep there dry clothing, food, and drugs.

The first rain of the year was falling when I left, and I was obliged to keep on what we call the "ballicaters," or ice barricades, much further up the bay than I had expected. The sea of the night before had smashed up the ponderous covering of ice right to the landwash. There were great gaping chasms between the enormous blocks, which we call pans, and half a mile out it was all clear water.

An island three miles out had preserved a bridge of ice, however, and by crossing a few cracks I managed to reach the island. Thence it was four miles across to a rocky promontory,—a course that would save some miles around the shore. As far as the eye could see, the ice seemed good, though it was very rough. Obviously, it had been smashed up by the sea, packed in again by the strong wind from the north-east, and I thought it had frozen solid together.

All went well till I was about a quarter of a mile from the landing point. Then the wind suddenly fell, and I noticed that I was travelling over loose "sish," which was like porridge. By stabbing down, I could drive my whip handle through it. The "sish" ice consists of the tiny fragments where the large pans have been pounding together on the heaving sea.

So quickly did the wind now come off shore, and so quickly did the packed "slob," relieved of the wind, "run ahead," that already I could not see one pan larger than ten-foot square; and, the ice loosening so quickly, I saw that retreat was absolutely impossible, neither was there any way to get off the little pan I was surveying from.

There not being a moment to lose, I tore off my oilskins, threw myself on my hands and knees by the side of the komatik to give a larger base to hold, and shouted to the dogs to go ahead for the shore. Before we had gone twenty yards, the dogs got frightened, hesitated for a moment, and the komatik instantly sank into the slob. It was necessary, then, for the dogs to pull, so that they now began to sink in also. Earlier in the season the father of the very boy I was going to operate on had been drowned in this same way, his dogs tangling their traces around him in the slob. This flashed into my mind, and I managed to loosen my sheath-knife, scramble forward, find the traces in the water,

and scut them, holding on to the leader's trace wound round my wrist.

There was a pan about twenty-five yards away, about the size of a dining-room table, and on to this the leader very shortly climbed, his long trace of ten fathoms almost reaching there before he went into the water. The other dogs were hopelessly logged. Gradually, I hauled myself along the line till suddenly he turned round and slipped out of his harness. It was impossible to make any progress through the sish ice by swimming, so I lay there, and thought it would soon be over, only wondering if any one would ever know how it happened. Suddenly I saw the trace of another big dog that had himself gone through before he reached the pan, but which was close to it. Along this I hauled, using him as a bow anchor, but much bothered by the other dogs, one of which got on to my shoulder, pushing me further down into the ice. There was only a yard or so when I passed my living anchor, and soon I lay with my dogs around me on the little piece of slob ice. I had to help them on to it as they worked through the lane that I had made. It was obvious we must be drowned if we remained on this little piece, so, taking off my moccasins, coat, gloves, and hat, and everything that I could spare, I tied my knife and moccasins separately on to the backs of the dogs. The moccasins, made of tanned sealskin, came right up to my thigh, and, filled with water, had impeded my progress. Taking the long traces from all the dogs but the two lightest, I gave them the full length of the line, tied the near end around my own wrists, and tried to make the dogs go ahead. Nothing would induce them to move, and, though I threw them off the pan two or three times, they struggled back upon it. Fortunately, I had with me a small black spaniel, almost a featherweight, with large furry paws, who will retrieve for me. I threw a piece of ice for him, and he managed to get over the slob after it on to another pan about twenty yards away. The other dogs followed him, and, after painful struggling, all got on but one. Taking all the run I could get on my little pan, I made a dive, slithering with the impetus along the surface till once more I sank. After a long fight through it, I was able to haul myself by the long traces on to this new pan. I had taken care this time to tie the harnesses to which I

was holding under the dogs' bellies, so that they could not slip them off. But the pan I was now on was not enough to bear us, and so this process had to be repeated immediately to avoid sinking with it, which it was already beginning to do.

I now realized that, though we had been working toward the shore, we had been losing ground all the time, for the off-shore wind had driven us a hundred yards further off. The widening gap kept full of the pounded ice, through which no man could possibly go. We were now resting on a piece of ice about ten by twelve feet, which, when I came to examine it, was not ice at all, but simply snow-covered slob, frozen into a mass, and which, I feared, would very soon break up in the general turmoil in the heavy sea, which was increasing as the ice drove off shore before the wind.

At first we drifted in the direction of a rocky point on which a heavy surf was breaking. Here I thought to swim ashore. But suddenly we struck a rock. A large piece broke off the already small pan, and what was left swung round in the backwash, and went right out to sea.

There was nothing now for it but to hope for a rescue. Alas! there was no possibility of being seen. As I have already mentioned, no one lives around this big bay. My hope was that the other komatik, knowing I was alone and had failed to keep my tryst, would perhaps come back to look for me. This, however, they did not do.

The westerly wind was rising all the time, which is our coldest wind at this time of the year, coming over the gulf ice. It was tantalizing, as I stood with next to nothing on, the wind going through me and every stitch soaked in ice water, to see some fifty yards away my komatik. It was still above water, with food, hot tea in a thermos bottle, dry clothing, matches, wood, and everything for making a fire to attract attention on it. It is easy to see a black object on the ice in the daytime, for its gorgeous whiteness shows off the least thing. But the tops of bushes and large pieces of kelp have so often deceived those looking out. Moreover, within our memory no man has been thus adrift on the bay ice. The chances were one to one thousand that I would be seen at all, and, if I were, I should be mistaken for some piece of refuse. To keep from freez-

ing, I cut off my long moccasins down to the feet, strung out some line, split the legs, and made a kind of jacket, which protected my back from the wind down as far as the waist. I have this jacket still, and my friends assure me it would make a good Sunday garment.

I had not gone more than half a mile before I saw my poor komatik disappear through the ice, which was every minute loosening up into the small pans that it consisted of, and it seemed like a friend gone and one more tie with home and safety lost.

To the northward about a mile (distant) lay this land under which I had passed in the morning.

By mid-day I had passed the island, and was moving into the ever-widening bay. It was scarcely safe to move on the pan for fear of breaking it, and yet I saw I must have the skins of some of my dogs, of which I had eight on the pan, if I was to live the night out. There was now some three to five miles of ice between me and the north side of the bay, so I could plainly see there was no hope of being picked up that day, even if seen, for no one could put out. Unwinding the sealskin traces from my waist, round which I had wound them to keep the dogs from eating them, I made a slip-knot, and passed over the first dog's head, tied it round my foot close to his neck, threw him on his back, and stabbed him in the heart. Poor beast! I loved him like a friend,—a beautiful dog,—but we could not all hope to live. In fact, I had no hope any of us would, at that time, but it seemed better to die fighting.

In spite of my care the struggling dog bit me rather badly in the leg. I suppose that my numb hands prevented my holding his throat as I could ordinarily do. In this way I sacrificed two more large dogs, receiving only one more bite, though I fully expected that the pan I was on would break up in the struggle. A short shrift seemed to me better than a long one, and I envied the dead dogs whose troubles were over so quickly. Indeed, I came to balance in my mind whether, if once I passed into the open sea, it would not be better by far to use my faithful knife on myself than to die by inches. There seemed no hardship in the thought. I seemed fully to sympathize with the Japanese view of hara-kiri. Working, however, saved

me from philosophizing. By the time I had skinned these dogs, and with my knife and some of the harness had strung the skins together, I was ten miles on my way, and it was getting dark. Away to the northward I could see a single light in the little village where I had slept the night before, where I had received the kindly hospitality of the single fisherman in whose comfortable home I have spent many a night. One could not help but think of them sitting down to tea, little thinking that there was any one watching them, for I had told them not to expect me back for three days. I had now also frayed out some rope into oakum, mixed it with some fat from the intestines of my dogs, but my match-box, which was always chained to me, had leaked, and my matches were in pulp.

Had I been able to make a light, it would have looked so unearthly out there on the sea that I felt sure they would see me. But that chance was now cut off. However, I kept the matches, hoping that I might dry them if I lived through the night. While working at the dogs, about every five minutes I would stand up and wave my hands toward the land. I had no flag, and I could not spare my shirt, for, wet as it was, it was better than nothing in that freezing wind, and, anyhow, it was nearly dark.

Unfortunately, the coves in among the cliffs are so placed that only for a very narrow space can the people in any house see the sea. Indeed, most of them cannot see the sea at all, so that whether it were possible for any one to see me I could not tell, even supposing it had been daylight.

Not daring to take any snow from the surface of my pan to break the wind with, I piled up the carcasses of my dogs. I could not sit down on the skin rug without getting soaked. During these hours I had continually taken off all my things, wrung them all out, swung them in the wind, and put on first one and then the other inside, hoping that what heat there was in my body would thus serve to dry them. In this I had been fairly successful.

My feet were the most trouble, for they immediately got wet again on account of my thin moccasins being easily soaked through on the snow. I suddenly thought of the way in which the Lapps, who tend our reindeer, manage for dry socks. They carry grass with them, which they

ravel up and pad into the shoe. Into this they put their feet, and then pack the rest with more grass, tying up the top with a binder. The ropes of the harness for our dogs are carefully sewed all over with two layers of flannel in order to make them soft against the dogs' sides. So, as soon as I could sit down, I started with my trusty knife to rip up the flannel. Though my fingers were more or less frozen, I was able also to ravel out the rope, put the same into my shoes, and use my wet socks inside my knickerbockers, where, though damp, they served to break the wind. Then, tying the narrow strips of flannel together, I bound up the top of the moccasins, Lapp fashion, and carried the bandage on up over my knee, making a ragged though most excellent puttee.

As to the garments I wore, I had opened recently a box of football clothes I had not seen for twenty years. I had found my old Oxford University football running shorts and a pair of Richmond football club red, yellow, and black stockings, exactly as I wore them twenty years ago. These with a flannel shirt and sweater vest were now all I had left. Coat, hat, gloves, oilskins, everything else, were gone, and I stood there in that odd costume, exactly as I stood twenty years ago on a football field. This costume, being very light, dried all the quicker until afternoon. Then nothing would dry any more, everything freezing stiff. It had been an ideal costume to struggle through the slob ice. I really believe the conventional garments missionaries are supposed to patronize would have been fatal.

My occupation till what seemed like midnight was unravelling rope, and with this I padded out my knickers inside, and my shirt as well, though it was a clumsy job, for I could not see what I was doing. Now, getting my largest dog, as big as a wolf and weighing ninety-two pounds, I made him lie down, so that I could cuddle round him. I then piled the three skins so that I could lie on one edge, while the other came just over my shoulders and head.

My own breath collecting inside the newly flayed skin must have had a soporific effect, for I was soon fast asleep. One hand I had plunged down inside the curled up dog. But the other hand, being gloveless, had frozen, and I suddenly woke shivering enough, I thought, to break my

pan. What I took to be the sun was just rising, but I soon found it was the moon, and then I knew it was about half-past twelve. The dog was having an excellent time. He hadn't been cuddled so warm all winter, so he resented my moving with low growls till he found it wasn't another dog.

The wind was steadily driving me now toward the open sea, and I could expect, short of a miracle, nothing but death out there. Somehow, one scarcely felt justified in praying for a miracle, but we have learned down here to pray for things we want, and, anyhow, just at that moment the miracle occurred. The wind fell off suddenly and came with a light air from the southward, and then dropped stark calm. The ice was now "all abroad," which I was sorry for, for there was a big safe pan not twenty yards away from me, and, if I could have got on that, I might have killed my other dogs, all of whom, to tell the truth, I was half afraid to tackle with a sheath-knife, they being so big and strong. But it was now freezing hard. I knew the calm water between us would form into cakes, and the chance of getting near enough to escape on it was gone. Still, I had this hope, that my pan would be opposite another village, called Goose Cove, at daylight, and might possibly be seen from there. I knew that the komatiks there would be starting at daybreak over the hills for a parade of Orangemen about twenty miles away. Possibly, therefore, I might be seen as they climbed the hills. So I lay down, and went to sleep again.

It seems impossible to say how long one sleeps, but I woke with a sudden thought in my mind that I must have a flag; but again I had no pole and no flag. However, I set to work in the dark to disarticulate the legs of my dead dogs, which were now frozen stiff, which offered a chance of carrying a flag. Cold as it was, I determined to sacrifice my shirt for that purpose with the first streak of daylight. It took a long time in the dark to get these legs off, and, when I had patiently marled them together with old harness rope, it was the heaviest and crookedest flag-post it has ever been my lot to see. I had had no food from six o'clock the morning before, when I had porridge and bread and butter. I had, however, a rubber band on instead of one of my garters, and I chewed that

for twenty-four hours. It saved me from thirst and hunger, oddly enough, and I did not drink from the ice of my pan, for it was salt-water ice. As from time to time I heard the cracking and grinding of the newly formed slob, it seemed that my devoted boat must inevitably soon go to pieces.

At last the sun rose, and the time came for the sacrifice of my shirt. So I stripped, and, much to my surprise, did not find it was half as cold as I had anticipated. I now re-formed my dogskins with the raw side out, so that they made a kind of coat quite rivalling Joseph's. But, with the rising of the sun, the frost came out of the joints of my dogs' legs, and the friction caused by waving it made my flag-pole almost tie itself in knots. Still, I could raise it three or four feet above my head, which was very important.

Now, however, I found that, instead of having drifted as far as I had reckoned, I was only off some cliffs, called Ireland Head, near which there was a little village looking seaward, whence I would certainly have been seen. But, as I had myself, earlier in the winter, been night-bound at the place, I had learnt there was not a single soul living there at all this winter. The people had all, as usual, migrated to the winter houses up the bay, where they get together for schooling and social purposes.

It was impossible to wave so heavy a flag all the time, and yet I dared not sit down, for that might be the exact moment some one would be in a position to see me from the hills. The only thing in my mind was how long I could stand up and how long go on waving that pole at the cliffs. Once or twice I thought I saw men against their snowy faces, which, I judged, were about five and one-half miles from me, but they were only trees. Once, also, I thought I saw a boat approaching. A glittering object kept appearing and disappearing on the water, but it was only a small piece of ice sparkling in the sun as it rose on the surface. I think that the rocking up and down on the waves of my cradle had helped me to sleep, for I felt as well as ever I did in my life; and with the hope of a long, sunny day, which seemed to promise, I felt sure I was good to last another twenty-four hours, if my boat would hold out.

I determined, at mid-day, to kill a big Eskimo dog I had, and drink its blood, which only a few days before I had been reading an account of in Dr. Nansen's book; that is, if I survived the battle with him. One could not help feeling, even then, one's ludicrous position, and I thought, if ever I got ashore again, I would have to laugh at myself standing hour after hour waving my shirt at those lofty cliffs, which seemed to assume a kind of sardonic grin, so that I could almost imagine they were laughing at me. One could not help thinking of the good breakfast that my colleagues were enjoying at the back of those same cliffs, and of the snug fire and comfortable room which we call our study.

I can honestly say that from first to last not a single sensation of fear ever entered my mind, even when struggling in the slob ice. It seemed so natural, I had been through in the ice half a dozen times before. Now I mostly felt sleepy, and the idea was very strong in my mind that I should soon reach the solution of the mysteries that I had been preaching about for so many years.

Only the previous night (Easter Sunday) we had been, at prayers in the cottage, discussing the fact that the soul was entirely separate from the body, that Christ's idea of the temple in which the body dwells is so amply borne out by modern science. We had talked of thoughts from that admirable book, "Brain and Personality," by Dr. Thompson of New York, and also of the same subject in the light of a recent operation performed at the Johns Hopkins Hospital by Dr. Harvey Cushing. The doctor had removed from a man's brain two large cystic tumors without giving the man an anæsthetic, and the patient had kept up a running conversation with him all the while the doctor's fingers were working in his brain.

Our eternal life has always been with me a matter of faith. It seems to me one of those mysteries that must always be a mystery to knowledge. But my own faith in this matter has been so untroubled that it seemed now almost natural to be leaving through this portal on an ice pan. In many ways, also, I could see how a death of this kind might be of value to the particular work that I am engaged in. Except for my friends, I had nothing I could think of to regret whatever. Certainly, I would like

to have told them the story. But then one does not carry folios of paper in running shorts which have no pockets, and all my writing gear had gone by the board with the komatik.

I could see still a testimonial to myself some distance away in my khaki overalls, which I had left in the struggle of the night before on another pan. They seemed a kind of company, and would possibly be picked up and suggest the true story. Running through my head all the time, quite unintentionally, were the words of the old hymn:—

> "My God, my Father, while I stray,
> Far from my home on life's dark way,
> Oh, teach me from my heart to say,
> Thy will be done!"

It is a hymn we hardly ever sing out here, and it was an unconscious memory of my boyhood days.

It was a perfect morning. A cobalt sky, an ultra-marine sea, a golden sun, an almost wasteful extravagance of crimson over hills of purest snow, which caught a reflected glow from rock and crag. Between me and their feet lay miles of rough ice and thin black slob formed during the night. Lastly, my poor gruesome pan, for the foreground, bobbing up and down on the edge of the open sea, stained with blood, carcasses, and débris. It was smaller than last night, . . . and I noticed also that the new ice from the water melted under the dogs' bodies had also been formed at the expense of its thickness. Five dogs, myself in colored football costume, and a bloody dogskin cloak, with a gay flannel shirt on a pole of frozen dogs' legs, completes the picture. The sun was almost hot by now, and I was conscious of a surplus of heat in my skin coat. I began to look longingly at one of my remaining dogs, for an appetite will rise even on an ice pan, and that made me think of fire. So once again I inspected my matches. Alas! the heads were in paste, all but three or four blue-top wax matches. These I now laid out to dry, and I searched around on my snow pan to see if I could get a piece of transparent ice to make a burning glass, for I was pretty sure that with all the unravelled tow I had stuffed into my leggings, and with the fat of my dogs, I could make smoke enough to be seen if only I could get a light. I had found a piece which I thought would do, and had gone back

to wave my flag, which I did every two minutes, when I suddenly thought I saw again the glitter of an oar. It did not seem possible, however, for it must be remembered it was not water which lay between me and the land, but slob ice, which a mile or two inside me was very heavy. Even if people had seen me, I did not think they could get through, though I knew that the whole shore would then be trying. Moreover, there was no smoke rising on the land to give me hope that I had been seen. There had been no gun-flashes in the night, and I felt sure that, had any one seen me, there would have been a bonfire on every hill to encourage me to keep going. So I gave it up, and went on with my work. But the next time I went back to my flag, it seemed very distinct, and, though it kept disappearing as it rose and fell on the surface I kept my eyes strained upon it, for my dark spectacles had been lost, and I was partly snowblind.

I waved my flag as high as I could raise it, broadside on. At last, beside the glint of the white oar, I made out the black streak of the hull. I knew that, if the pan held on for another hour, I would be all right.

With that strange perversity of the human intellect, the first thing I thought of was what trophies I could carry with my luggage from the pan, and I pictured the dog-bone flagstaff adorning my study. (The dogs actually ate it afterwards.) I thought of preserving my ragged puttees in my museum. I could see that my rescuers were frantically waving, and, when they came within shouting distance, I heard some one cry out: "Don't get excited. Keep on the pan where you are." They were infinitely more excited than I. Already to me it seemed just as natural now to be saved as, half an hour before, it seemed inevitable I should be lost, and had my rescuers only known, as I did, the sensation of a bath in that ice when you could not dry yourself afterwards, they need not have expected me to follow in the wake of the apostle Peter, and throw myself into the water.

At last the boat came up to my pan with such force that I thought it would go to pieces in the collision. A warm hand-shake all around, and a warm cup of tea inside, thoughtfully packed in a bottle, and we hoisted in my remaining dogs, and started back. There were not only

five Newfoundland fishermen at the oars, but five men with Newfoundland muscles in their backs, and five as brave hearts as can ever beat in the bodies of human beings. So we forged through to the shore. To my astonishment they told me that four men had been out cutting some dead harp seals out from a store the night before. As they were leaving for home, my pan of ice had drifted out clear of Hare Island, and one of them, with his keen fisherman's eyes, had seen something unusual. They at once returned to their village, saying there was a man on a pan. But they had been discredited, for the people thought that it could be only the top of some tree.

All the time I had been driving along I knew that there was one man on that coast who had a good spy-glass. He tells me he instantly got up in the midst of his supper, on hearing the news, and hurried over the cliff to the lookout with his glass. Immediately, dark as it was, he made out that there was a man out on the ice. Indeed, he saw me wave my hands every now and again towards the shore. By . very easy process of reasoning on so uninhabited a shore, they immediately knew who it was, though some of them argued that it must be some one else. They went down at once to try and launch a boat, but that was impossible. Miles of ice lay between them and me, and the heavy sea was hurling great blocks on the landwash, and night was already falling, the wind blowing hard on shore.

The whole village was aroused, and messengers were despatched at once along the coast, and lookouts toled off to all the favorable points, so that while I considered myself a laughing-stock bowing with my flag to those unresponsive cliffs, there were really many eyes watching me. One man told me with his glass he distinctly saw me waving the shirt flag. There was little slumber that night in the villages, and even the men told me there were few dry eyes, as they thought of the impossibility of saving me from perishing. We are not given to weeping over-much on this shore, but there are tears that do a man honor.

Before daybreak this fine volunteer crew had been gotten together. The boat, with such a force behind it of will power, would, I believe, have gone through anything. And, judging by the heavy breakers through which we were guided, loaded with their heavy ice battering rams,

when at last we ran through the harbor mouth with the boat on our return, I knew well what wives and children had been thinking of when they saw their loved ones put out. Only two years ago I remember a fisherman's wife watching her husband and three sons take out a boat to bring in a stranger that was showing flags for a pilot. But the boat and its occupants have not yet come back.

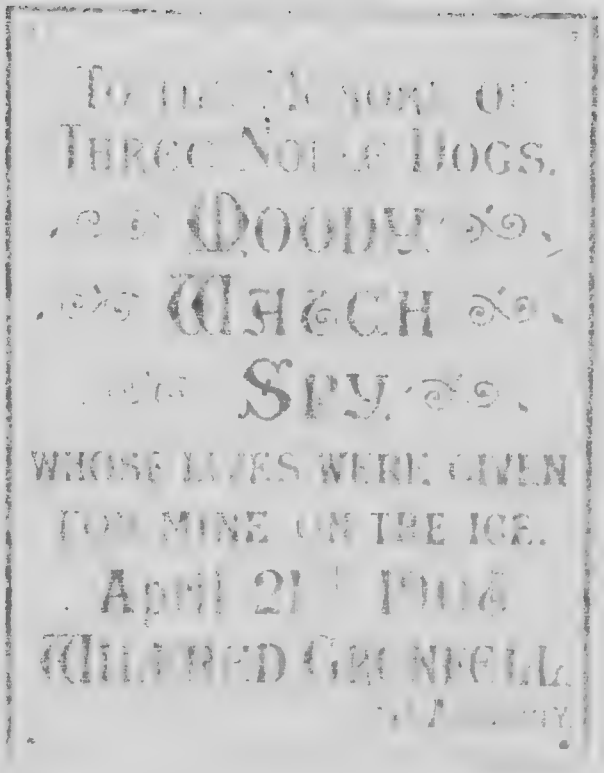
Every soul in the village was on the beach as we neared the shore. Every soul was waiting to shake hands when I landed. Even with the grip that one after another gave me, some no longer trying to keep back the tears, I did not find out my hands were frost-burnt,—a fact I have not been slow to appreciate since. I must have been a weird sight as I stepped ashore, tied up in rags stuffed out with oakum, wrapped in the bloody skins of dogs, with no hat, coat, or gloves besides, and only a pair of short knickers. It must have seemed to some as if it was the old man of the sea coming ashore.

But no time was wasted before a pot of tea was exactly where I wanted it to be, and some hot stew was locating itself where I had intended an hour before the blood of one of my remaining dogs should have gone.

Rigged out in the warm garments that fishermen wear, I started with a large team as hard as I could race for hospital. For I had learnt that the news had gone over that I was lost. It was soon painfully impressed upon me that I could not much enjoy the ride, for I had to be hauled like a log up the hills, my feet being frost-burnt so that I could not walk. Had I guessed this before going into the house, I might have avoided much trouble.

It is time to bring this egotistic narrative to an end. We all love life. I was glad to be back once more with possibly a new lease of it before me. I had learned on the pan many things, but chiefly that the one cause for regret, when we look back on a life which we think is closed forever, will be the fact that we have wasted its opportunities, and, as I went to sleep, there still rang in my ears the same verse of the old hymn which had been my companion on the ice.

WILFRED T. GRENFELL.


To the Memory of
Three Noble Dogs,
Woody,
Watch
and
Spy,
Whose Lives were given
for Mine on the Ice.
April 21st 1904
Charles Brunell.

when at last we ran through the harbor mouth with the boat on my return. I knew well what wives and children had been thinking of when they saw their loved ones put out [illegible] years ago I remember a fisherman's wife watching her husband and three sons take out a boat to [illegible] a fortnight's and showing flags for a pilot. But [illegible] have not yet come back.

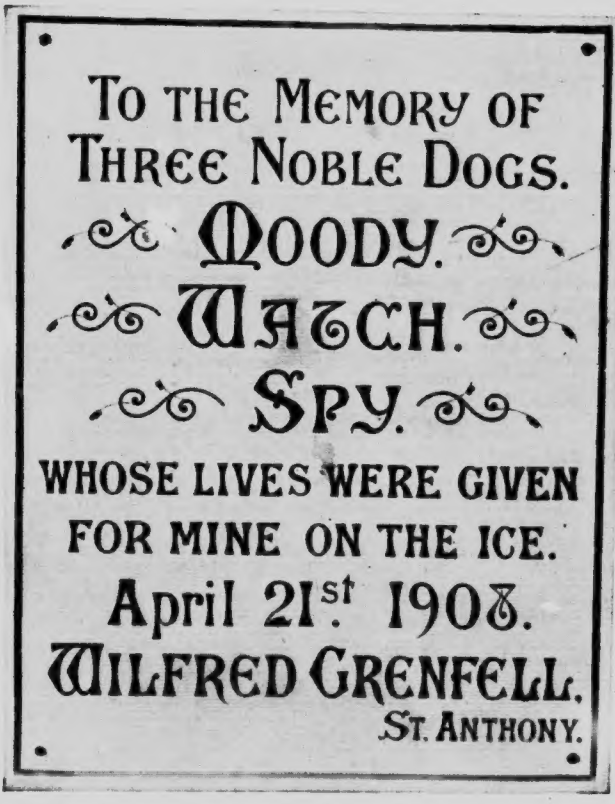
[illegible] was on the beach as we neared the shore. Some [illegible] waiting to shake hands when I landed. [illegible] one by one after another gave me some [illegible] to keep back the tears. I did not find out [illegible] have not been close to [illegible] must have been a weird sight as I stepped [illegible] rags stuff [illegible] with oakum wrapped [illegible] and tops of dogs, with no hat, coat, or gloves [illegible] with a pair of short knickers. It must have [illegible] the old man of the sea coming ashore.

But no time was [illegible] before I was at the door exactly where I wanted it to be, and [illegible] the boat floating itself where I had intended an hour before the blood of one of my remaining dogs should have gone.

Rigged out in the warm garments that fishermen wear, I started with a large team as hard as I could race for hospital. For I had learnt that the news had gone over that I was lost. It was soon painfully impressed upon me that I could not much enjoy the ride, for I had to be hauled like a log up the hills, my feet being frost-burnt so that I could not walk. Had I guessed this before going into the house, I might have avoided much trouble.

It is time to bring this egotistic narrative to an end. We all love life. I was glad to be back once more with possibly a new lease of it before me. I had learned on the pan many things, but chief that the one cause for regret, when we look back on a life which we think is closed forever, will be the fact that we have wasted its opportunities, and, as I went to sleep, there still rang in my ears the same verse of the old hymn which had been my companion on the ice.

Wilfred T. Grenfell.




MEMORIAL TABLET AT ST. ANTHONY'S HOSPITAL
NEWFOUNDLAND